

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2115

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AFSP, AG

SUBJ: NEW CONSULAR/COMMERCIAL POSITION FOR ALGIERS

REF: ALGIERS 2432

1. THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN ALGERIA AND THE U.S. IN NOVEMBER 1974 AND INCREASING GROWTH OF U.S. INTERESTS HERE OVER PAST THREE YEARS HAVE BADLY OVERLOADED OUR COMMERCIAL AND CONSULAR STAFFS AND THEY SHOULD BE INCREASED. DURING MY CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON IN DECEMBER, I POINTED OUT THAT GIVEN LACK OF SPACE WE DID NOT WANT TO ENLARGE OUR STAFF GREATLY, BUT THAT WE MUST HAVE TWO MORE OFFICER POSITIONS IF WE ARE TO COPE WITH THE FLOW OF WORK.

2. THE U.S. BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN ALGIERS NOW NUMBERS ABOUT 500-600 PERSONS. THERE ARE CLOSE TO SEVENTY U.S. FIRMS WITH OFFICES IN ALGIERS. THE TOTAL VALUE OF SIGNED CONTRACTS HERE ON WHICH AMERICAN FIRMS ARE WORKING NOW STANDS AT SOME DOLS 1.5 BILLION. AMERICAN BUSINESS VISITOR TRAFFIC CONTINUES TO INCREASE AND THE CARE AND FEEDING OF BUSINESSMEN IS A CONSTANT PREOCCUPATION. ALL THIS ACTIVITY IS REFLECTED IN OUR INCREASING COMMERCIAL WORKLOAD AND IN OUR INABILITY TO KEEP ABREAST OF WASHINGTON'S REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

3. CONCOMITANT WITH THIS INCREASE IN COMMERCIAL

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ACTIVITIES IS THE GROWING RANGE OF CONSULAR PROBLEMS

AND DUTIES WHICH ARE BROUGHT ABOUT BY MORE FREQUENT VISA REQUESTS FOR ALGERIANS GOING TO THE U.S. AS WELL AS THE PROBLEMS OF A LARGE AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN ALGERIA. OUR NON-IMMIGRANT VISA WORKLOAD INCREASED FROM 676 IN FY 72 TO 1,259 IN FY 1974, FOR INSTANCE, AND WE NOW HAVE SIX AMERICANS IN JAIL ON DRUG OFFENSES. THE CONSULAR POSITION, WHICH WAS ORIGINALLY PART TIME, IS INCREASINGLY DEMANDING OF THE TIME OF THE PRESENT CONSULAR OFFICER WHO IS ALSO REQUIRED TO SPEND A SUBSTANTIAL PART OF HIS TIME ON POLITICAL AFFAIRS.

4. THE ADDITION OF ONE OFFICER TO PERFORM CONSULAR AND COMMERCIAL FUNCTIONS IS ESSENTIAL TO ALLEVIATE THE STRAIN ON THE CURRENT STAFF. THE ADDITIONAL OFFICER (AT THE FSO-5 OR 6 LEVEL WITH MINIMUM S-3 R-3 FRENCH) WOULD BE EXPECTED TO DIVIDE HIS OR HER TIME BETWEEN CONSULAR AND COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS, UNDER SUPERVISION OF COMMERCIAL ATTACHE. IN THIS PROPOSED ARRANGEMENT, PRESENT CONSULAR OFFICER WOULD DEVOTE MOST OF HIS TIME TO POLITICAL AFFAIRS, REMAINING AVAILABLE TO SUPPLEMENT NEW CONSULAR/COMMERCIAL OFFICER. THIS ARRANGEMENT WOULD ALSO FREE COMMERCIAL ATTACHE FROM ROUTINE COMMERCIAL INTELLIGENCE AND OTHER DUTIES TO ENABLE HIM TO CONCENTRATE MORE ON MAJOR PROJECTS, CCP PROMOTION EVENTS, COMMERCIAL REPORTING AND CALLS.

5. NEW POSITION SHOULD BE OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO A JUNIOR OFFICER IN CONSULAR CONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO ENLARGE HIS OR HER SCOPE. HE OR SHE WOULD HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP A RANGE OF COMMERCIAL SKILLS LIMITED ONLY BY HIS OR HER TALENTS AND ENERGY.

6. I HOPE DEPARTMENT WILL AGREE TO THIS MODEST BUT ESSENTIAL STAFFING REQUEST AND MOVE RAPIDLY TO ASSIGN AN OFFICER TO THIS NEW POSITION. PARKER

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